

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.

FACT, NEWS, AND GOSSIP.

The President's visit to Washington—One Hundred Thousand Dollars for the Richmond Custom-House—Briefs.

(From Our Regular Correspondent.)

WASHINGTON, February 23.—The happiest man in Washington to-day was Hon. George D. Wise. For weeks he has been in his seat, early and late, waiting to be recognized to call up the Senate bill appropriating \$100,000 to enlarge the Richmond custom-house.

He saw Illinois recognized seven times, Minnesota several times, Kansas four times, and so on, and yet no recognition came to Virginia, although he and Colonel Cabell were expecting it daily. Finally, on Friday Mr. Carlisle sent for your representative and told him that he would recognize him second this morning. He was in his seat long before the House met. The Speaker was true to his word, and when the bill was called up Mr. Wise stated that the present public building was erected when Richmond had less than 27,000 population, and when the business of the United States courts was very limited. Now the city, he said, had a population of nearly 50,000 and the two Federal courts both greatly increased business. The post-office, which has quadrupled its business and increased its employees from eight to sixty, and the office of collector of customs, and collector of internal revenue, all have to be crowded into this building. Last year nearly two millions were collected by the internal-revenue department of Richmond. The Postmaster-General had in a letter to Congress strongly approved of the bill, and it was also recommended by the Architect of the Treasury Department. The business of Richmond had increased, he said, threefold since the present building was erected. A Pennsylvania member made objection that the House committee had only appropriated an appropriation of \$75,000, whereas the Senate bill appropriated \$100,000. Mr. Wise reported that after a full investigation it had been ascertained that it would require the amount provided for in the Senate bill. The objection was subsequently withdrawn. "Calamity" Weller moved that \$25,000 of the appropriation be paid in standard silver dollars. Of course it was lost, as anything "Calamity" offers is defeated. Your representative gave the remainder of his ten minutes to Hon. John S. Wise, who earnestly advocated the bill, and said he was opposed to making a vote at a cherry. It was far better, in his judgment, to give once at once than to have to make another appropriation to complete the job. "The Senate in its action," he said, "was governed by the statements of the Postmaster-General and the Architect of the Treasury." There were no objections to the consideration of the bill, and it passed without opposition. An amendment to "Calamity" Weller's motion to the effect that the salary of the Iowa statesman be paid in silver dollars caused a general laugh.

PERSONAL NEWS ITEMS.

Mr. L. Q. Washington gave a dinner-party at Wormley's last evening (February 22d) in honor of Major John W. Daniel, of Virginia. The other guests were Senators Bayard, Lamar, Hampton, and Gibson; Representatives Dunn, of Arkansas, and Barbour, of Virginia; and Hon. John Goode, Ex-Mayor of Fredericksburg, who carried the Bill to the Senate.

On motion of Mr. Bayard, the House then went into Committee of the Whole on the naval appropriation bill, and Mr. Long concluded his speech in support of the proposition to increase the navy. General discussion of the second section of the bill then took place, and was participated in by Messrs. Cannon, Hewitt, Cannon, Holman, Townsend, Hiscock, Reed, Thomas, Keifer, Curtin, McAdoo, Eaton, Kelley, and Ellis.

Mr. Thomas, of Illinois, then raised a point of order against this section that it changed the existing law and was not in the interest of economy. The Chair sustained this point of order, and the section was stricken from the bill.

Mr. Talbot, of Maryland, offered an amendment appropriating \$1,780,000 for the completion of a steel-cruiser of not less than 5,000 nor more than 6,000 tons displacement and the armament therefor, as authorized by Act of Congress approved August 5, 1882. Adopted.

On motion of Mr. Randall the amendment was amended by adding a proviso that the Secretary of the Navy shall approve of the construction of said vessel.

Mr. Thomas offered an amendment appropriating \$2,200,000 for the completion of the Puritan, Terror, Monadnock, Amphitrite, and Miantonomah, provided their completion shall be recommended by the Secretary of the Navy. Lost—yeas, 64; nays, 95.

On motion of Mr. Boutelle an amendment was adopted providing for the return of the Alert with the thanks of this Government to the Government of Great Britain; for the transfer of the Bear to the Treasury Department to be used as a revenue-cutter in Alaskan waters; and for the use of the Thetis in the navy as a surveying vessel.

The committee then rose and reported the bill to the House. The action of the committee in adopting the Talbot amendment was ratified by the House—yeas, 111; nays, 99.

The bill was passed, and at 6:30 P. M. the House took a recess until 8 o'clock, the evening session to be for the consideration of business relating to the District of Columbia.

Sudden Death of an ex-Official. (By telegraph to the Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, February 23.—General Hiram C. Capron, ex-Commissioner of Agriculture, died last night, after a brief illness. He attended the dedication ceremonies at the Washington monument Saturday and contracted a severe cold.

Resignation of a Minister. (By cable to the Dispatch.)

ST. PETERSBURG, February 23.—Count Tolstoi, Minister of the Interior, has resigned, but the Czar declines to accept the resignation. Count Tolstoi, however, persists in his purpose, pleading that the excessive duties of his office, owing to the activity of the nihilists, are undermining his health.

BRIEF NEWS ITEMS.

The Appropriations Committee of the House has inserted in the sundry civil appropriation bill a clause giving the

President the discretion of suspending silver coinage for a year from July 1st. No visitors were admitted to the White House to-day.

The orders of Lieutenant A. F. Baker to command the Fish Hawk have been revoked, and the vessel will be laid up at Norfolk for the rest of the winter.

The Senate considered the post-office appropriation bill to-day.

The House to-night is devoting itself to District of Columbia matters.

Governor Glick, of Kansas, is in the city.

The sundry civil bill appropriates \$40,000 to the Washington monument for completing interior stairways, &c.

The silver-men now talk of an extra session.

Rev. Edward Everett Hale is here to give a reading from his own works for the benefit of the Associated Charities.

XLVIIIth CONGRESS.

WASHINGTON, February 23, 1885.

Senate.

The Des Moines river-land-titles bill was taken up, Mr. Lapham's speech was concluded, and the bill passed—yeas 31, nays 24. It restores to the public domain lands improperly certified by the Interior Department to the State of Iowa.

The consideration of the post-office appropriation bill was then resumed. On the recommendation of the Senate committee the House provision requiring the Secretary of the Treasury to bid in competition with private parties for the manufacture of postage stamps, &c., and the House provision for an extra rate on letters intended for special expedition in delivery, were stricken out.

Mr. Maxey, by direction of the Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads, offered an amendment to extend in favor of third-class post-offices the privilege given the Postmaster-General to lease suitable premises for the accommodation of first- and second-class offices. Voted down on a point of order.

Mr. Frye offered an amendment appropriating \$800,000 for the transportation of foreign mails, including transit across the Isthmus of Panama, and authorizing the Postmaster-General to contract with the most responsible bidder for the carriage of such mails at not to exceed fifty cents a national mile on the trip each way actually travelled between the terminal points, but providing that such mails shall be carried on American steamships, and the aggregate of such contracts shall not exceed one-half the sum appropriated by the amendment.

Mr. Bayard made a point of order that Mr. Frye's amendment was general legislation.

After a long discussion, in which Messrs. Bayard, Beck, and Vest opposed this amendment, and Messrs. Frye, Call, and Plumb supported it, it was held to be in order, and was then agreed to—yeas, 30; nays, 18. A number of other amendments were voted down on the point of order that they embodied general legislation.

On motion of Mr. Brown the Senate retained the House provision permitting newspaper articles to be marked without increase of postage. The bill was then read a third time and passed without division. It now goes to the House for concurrence or non-concurrence in the Senate amendments.

Mr. Mitchell said he would to-morrow call up private pension bills on the Senate calendar.

The Senate then went into executive session, and when the doors were reopened adjourned.

House of Representatives.

Mr. Randall, chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, reported the sundry civil appropriation bill, and it was referred to the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Bland, of Missouri, reserving all points of order.

On motion of Mr. Blount, of Georgia, Senate bill for the erection of a public building at Macon, Ga., at an ultimate cost of \$125,000.

On motion of Mr. G. D. Wise, of Virginia, Senate bill was passed appropriating \$100,000 for the enlargement of the custom-house at Richmond, Va. Senate amendments were concurred in to House bill forfeiting the Texas-Pacific land-grant.

Senate amendments were concurred in to House bill prohibiting the importation of contract labor.

On motion of Mr. Randall, the House then went into Committee of the Whole on the naval appropriation bill, and Mr. Long concluded his speech in support of the proposition to increase the navy. General discussion of the second section of the bill then took place, and was participated in by Messrs. Cannon, Hewitt, Cannon, Holman, Townsend, Hiscock, Reed, Thomas, Keifer, Curtin, McAdoo, Eaton, Kelley, and Ellis.

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THE WAR IN THE SOUDAN.

THE SITUATION CRITICAL.

A Lively British-Berber Struggle—Recent Reports—England's War-Spirit Aroused.

A Korti special of the 22d says: A dispatch from Abu Klea says: "General Buller, who arrived here on the 17th instant from Gubat, at noon on the 17th commenced a systematic shelling of the Arab lines. Two well-directed shots did the enemy great damage, one exploding amidst a group of men engaged in placing a howitzer on the summit of a hill east of our sailors' fort, and the other removing the wheel of a gun-carriage. Lord Charles Beresford also did the enemy great injury with the Gardner guns. The honors of the day fell to Major Wardrop, who, with thirteen men, stole quietly round the enemy's right, and found they had only a few hundred riflemen on the hills and no reserve spearmen. Major Wardrop and his men, keeping out of sight, sent volleys at a range of eight hundred yards on the enemy's flank. Leaving one man at this point to continue the firing, he took the twelve others, and as quickly as possible pursued the same tactics at three successive hills, giving the Arabs the impression that fresh bodies of British troops were arriving. The Mahdi's forces became panic-stricken, ceased firing, and decamped toward Metemneh, taking their guns and dead and wounded with them. A few Arab scouts only were left three miles off to watch our movements. There has been no sign of the enemy since. General Buller will advance to Gakdul as soon as reinforcements arrive from Korti, and the British will then engage the enemy in a final battle. The British killed and wounded were four killed and twenty-five wounded."

A London telegram of the 22d says: Another account of the skirmish at Abu Klea on the 17th says: "Before the rebels fell back there was some very active fighting, but it was confined to the sharpshooters on both sides, as the Arabs did not come near enough to General Buller's entrenchments to make volleys firing effective. For the same reason, and also on account of the scarcity of ammunition, the British guns were not brought into action. The loss on the British side was three killed and twenty-one wounded. General Wolsley thinks that General Buller will be able to make his way back to Gakdul Wells without serious difficulty."

General Graham will have eight thousand troops in Suakin by the 9th of March. These will include the Indian contingent.

Forensic Nightingale, Lady Roseberry, Lady Rothschild, Mrs. Gladstone, and other well-known ladies have formed a committee to raise funds for which to provide assistance and comfort for sick and wounded soldiers in the Sudan.

A London telegram of the 23d says: The newspaper correspondents with General Buller's force at Abu Klea telegraphed accounts of the capture of the British camp on the 17th instant, which the London papers magnify into a British victory. As Lord Wolsley has sent no report of the affair, it is probably regarded by him as insignificant. The withdrawal of the Sudanese to Metemneh is attributed to want of water and other supplies. Dispatches from Korti say it is expected there that the attacks on General Buller will be renewed. The Sudanese around Abu Klea, and the Mahdi's uniform, shows that a contingent has arrived from Khartoum. General Buller will be able to resume his retreat until he obtains additional means of transportation. The second convey of camels, which is taking General Buller's ammunition, left Gakdul Friday morning.

DEPARTURE OF THE SCOTS GUARDS.

The departure of the Scots Guards from the capital was marked with the same popular enthusiasm which characterized the departure of the Westminster Bridge Guards. The British troops, accompanied by their families, were waiting to bid them Godspeed. The prince signaled the event by appearing in the uniform of the Guards. He addressed them briefly, encouraging them to high endeavor, and expressing the hope that the necessity of their absence from England might be of brief duration. The royal party remained while the Guards embarked upon the steamer to Gakdul.

The Cunard Steamship Company has offered the Government the use of the Oregon for transporting troops to Egypt in case of an emergency, without stipulating terms.

Lieutenant-General Sir Gerald Graham, who was recently appointed to the command of the expedition to open up the Suakin-Berber route, is to cooperate with General Lord Wolsley's force in the Sudan, intends, from present indications, to use artillery pretty freely on the Arab forces under Osman Digna. Orders were sent to-night to the Chatham naval depot to ship to Suakin within two days twenty thousand shrapnel shells, loaded and ready for immediate use. The Woolwich Arsenal is now working night and day turning out artillery material for the same destination. General Graham, before his departure to Suakin, had an interview with Ismail Pacha, ex-Khedive of Egypt, and Reih Pacha, both of whom are in London. Reih was formerly Egyptian Minister of War, at one time served as Governor-General of the Sudan at Berber, and knows the country tribes perfectly. Reih warned General Graham that if he undertook to go from Suakin in March he would court disaster. The Kamshin wind, he said, is fatal to Europeans. It begins in March and blows for five weeks. Ismail Pacha advised General Graham to begin the campaign in the autumn. He also advised the gradual construction of the Suakin-Berber railway, which could be greatly strengthened against attacks from the enemy by block-houses at short distances apart.

UNHEEDED APPEALS.

Letters, written by General Gordon before the fall of Khartoum—His Fratricide Demanded—See Success.

(By cable to the Dispatch.)

LONDON, February 23.—A number of dispatches from General Gordon to the Home Government in regard to the situation of affairs at Khartoum previous to the capture of that city are published to-day. On September 18th he wrote as follows:

"How many times have I written asking for reinforcements, but my letters have never been answered. The hearts of my gallant men are weary with this long waiting for assistance and failure to receive any word of encouragement which would lead them to expect help shortly. While you eat and drink and rest in good beds we are always fighting."

It appears from a letter dated December 14th that General Gordon never said "I can hold out for years," as has been published; but, on the contrary, had declared that food was scarce and that relief should be sent him at once.

The Egyptian Blue-Book issued to-day contains a letter sent by General

Gordon to General Lord Wolsley in December. This says: "I have five steamers and nine guns at Metemneh awaiting your orders. I can hold out forty days longer with ease. After that it will be difficult. The loss of Colonel Stewart is terrible. I told him to give you all the information possible. He had my journal from January 3d to September 10th. The Mahdi is eight miles from Khartoum. Stewart is all right. The situation there is as follows: I am coming. My journal from September 10th to date is on board one of the steamers which you will find at Metemneh. I continue to have occasional fights with the Arabs. It is rumored that all the Europeans with the Mahdi, including Slatin Bey and the nuns, have become Mussulmans. Lupton Bey has surrendered. I have sent out scores of messengers in all directions during the last eight months. Do not send postal letters to me. The risk is too great. Do not write me in cipher; I have none, and it is of no use. The Mahdi knows everything. Take the road from Abu Klea to Metemneh. You need not fear the Mahdi. Both the Greek Consul and Austrian Consul are safe. The Mahdi has captured a letter from the King of Abyssinia to me. Your expedition, as I understand it, is for the relief of the garrison of Khartoum. I failed to accept it. I decline to admit that it is for the rescue of me personally."

A letter from General Gordon, dated September 9th, contains the following statements: "We have sufficient money and provisions here at Khartoum to last four months. At the expiration of that period we shall be much embarrassed. At Senaar there is dour enough. The garrison at Gakdul and the people in that neighborhood are giving tactics at the neighborhood of the major-general. The inhabitants are opposed to fighting, and the Mahdi. Although we wrote you that it was impossible to send Colonel Stewart to Berber on account of many things which had occurred here, we afterwards saw fit to send him, together with the French and English consuls, in a small steamer to Dongola to communicate with the British commander there concerning the Sudan. We detailed two large steamers to accompany them to Berber to keep them clear for the relief of the garrison. How many times have I written asking for reinforcements and calling your serious attention to the Sudan, and no answer came. The men's hearts became weary of delay. While you are eating and drinking and resting in good beds, we are watching night and day, trying to quell the movement of the Mahdi. Of course you take no interest to suppress this rebellion, the serious consequences of which to pass by Berber towards London. How many times have I written asking for reinforcements and calling your serious attention to the Sudan, and no answer came. The men's hearts became weary of delay. While you are eating and drinking and resting in good beds, we are watching night and day, trying to quell the movement of the Mahdi. Of course you take no interest to suppress this rebellion, the serious consequences of which to pass by Berber towards London. How many times have I written asking for reinforcements and calling your serious attention to the Sudan, and no answer came. The men's hearts became weary of delay. 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